

3 *Theology vol 3.*
C O N S I D E R A T I O N S

O N T H E

S T A T E o f S U B S C R I P T I O N

T O T H E

A R T I C L E S a n d L I T U R G Y

O F T H E

C H U R C H o f *ENGLAND*, *K*

Towards the Close of the YEAR 1773:

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CONSIDERATIONS

STATE RESOLUTION

TO THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK



IN SENATE, JANUARY 12, 1892.

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION

PASSED BY THE SENATE, JANUARY 12, 1892.

ALBANY:

JOHN B. LEECH, STATE PRINTER, 1892.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

State of Subscription, &c.

SO much has been published of late, concerning the propriety or impropriety of subscribing to *human articles of faith*, and particularly concerning those *subscriptions* which are *required* in this kingdom ; that it might seem unnecessary to add to the bulk of a controversy already too large. Yet till the matter is brought to *an issue*, it is an affair of such importance to the peace of many conscientious men, the honour of our church, and the interests of true christianity, that no man, who is satisfied of its importance, can well be justified if he does not lend a helping hand towards its

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decision

decision. What has passed, has thrown new light on the subject; and though nothing has yet been judicially determined, nor any one step been taken towards *legally* removing the difficulty under which we labour; yet it cannot be said, that *nothing* has been done by our altercations, And it may lead us nearer to some conclusion, to have it known how far the cause has imperceptibly *advanced*, notwithstanding every art to defer it.

This I shall endeavour to shew, by a short review of the question: And I choose to begin *ab ovo*, that every one into whose hands this pamphlet shall be put, may have the substance of the whole case before him: And that if the parliament shall do *nothing* in this session, towards giving relief to a large body of conscientious Christians, the world may judge between us; who is most in the right, he who seeks it, or they who shall still persist in refusing to comply with so pious a request. Few are at leisure, or willing, to wade through volumes of controversy,

troverſy, or even to turn over what has appeared of late on the ſubject: But I ſhould apprehend this ſuccinct account may ſuffice, to let even a ſtranger into the moſt material points on which the debate turns (which he may purſue to advantage, if he find himſelf inclined, elſewhere); and I appeal to the warmeſt advocates for our Subſcription themſelves, whether the facts I ſhall relate (*however melancholy the truth*) be not true,

When LUTHER*, from the abuſe of indulgences, had been led into an examination of other uſurpations of the church of Rome, and in conſequence of that had been driven from his allegiance to the Pope, he tranſlated the BIBLE into his own tongue†; rightly judging, that he could no way better juſtify what he had done, or give a greater blow to the papal power, than by putting the holy ſcriptures into the hands

B 2 of

* A. D. 1617.

† 1523.

of the people. Here he laid the *chief corner stone* of the REFORMATION. The art of printing, lately invented†, which had levelled the way before him, now forwarded the work; and by multiplying copies with ease, spread the BIBLE as it had been spreading other learning among the laity, which for many centuries preceeding had been confined to the cloyster.

No sooner were men invited to the study of the *Scriptures*, than all with eagerness applied themselves to the task. They had been long trained to a form of religion without the substance; to practices gainful indeed to the clergy, burthensome enough to themselves, and which they now were told had no foundation in the Word of God; and they were sufficiently ready to enquire into the truth of the allegation. They were told, likewise, that they had been greatly misled in the affairs that concerned

† About 1440.

cerned their eternal interests ; and this they now might search into for themselves. They were well inclined to do. The enquiry was new, the matter important ; and the novelty and importance whetted their appetite, and added fresh vigour to their industry. The more they searched, the more they perceived they had been taught for *doctrines* the commandments of *men*. The BIBLE was appealed to as their ONLY RULE OF FAITH : and the natural consequence turned out to the disadvantage of *popery*, wherever the enquiry was pursued.

But as there is seldom much good without its alloy of evil ; so this reference to the holy scriptures (which is the only reference we can make in the affairs of God, now that inspiration has ceased) became the occasion of much reproach to the *Reformers*. Though the most *material* parts of the Bible are sufficiently clear in all matters that relate to salvation ; yet in that infan-

fancy

fancy of letters, it was not to be expected that all the most *difficult* passages in it, and the whole *system* of revelation, obscured for ages past, should be rightly unravelled at once, *Learning* itself mislead some; *ignorance*, others; *enthusiasm*, naturally catching, a third sort; and a spirit of *disobedience* to government, not distinguishing aright, thought itself authorised to run any lengths, when the pastors of the church were seen to disobey their ecclesiastical superior. Hence, many strange doctrines arose in different quarters; and many quarrels and much confusion ensued; and then, what was really only a natural consequence of the first recovery of liberty to the human mind, (exulting in its freedom like an animal just released from a long confinement) was laid to the charge of the *Reformation* itself.

In these circumstances the *Reformers* thought it necessary to clear themselves from such an imputation: And when the Emperor

peror Charles V. had appointed a solemn diet to be held at *Augsburg* *, to consider among other things, of the affairs of religion, and terminate the differences that had arisen in Germany; the principal leaders, to justify their conduct and shew the purity of their doctrine, drew up a CONFESSION OF THEIR FAITH; which they presented in form to the Emperor, subscribed with the names of all those who chose to sign it: While others, whose sentiments did not entirely coincide with this, drew up such *confessions* as were more conformable with their own opinion. All parties were agreed, in considering the BIBLE as the sole RULE of FAITH, by which all *doctrines* were to be tried; and each gave his own *interpretation* of it, or subscribed that which appeared to himself to be most consonant with it.

What

What was then done by way of *justification*, before Charles V. was done also by others afterwards in the like cases ; and *confessions* and *apologies* for those confessions, became numerous.

THUS FAR was certainly *proper* : And as these *confessions* were but the fallible comments of fallible men, their number, or their difference in disputable matters, was really no disparagement to the GOSPEL OF CHRIST ; which was the same yesterday ; to-day and for ever, and is as clear as the *Spirit* of God saw fit to make it. To this RULE they all referred, as the only standard of truth. On this PRINCIPLE they had separated from the church of Rome ; and on this PRINCIPLE alone they could *justify* their separation. Happy had it been for the church of Christ, if they had kept to this PRINCIPLE. They *all* asserted it, as all do *still assert* it, to this day ; but all alas ! very early *departed* from it.

The

The opposition they met with, too naturally inspired the writers with an ambition to defend what they had written. The zeal they had shewn in so righteous a cause had gained to each many followers; who could never be prevailed upon to believe that *such* men could be mistaken. Every one at first readily subscribed the doctrine of his teacher; and when he had once *subscribed*, thought himself bound, as did the writer himself, to *support* it. Hence the confession or apology of its *leader*, became the characteristic of every *congregation*; which, as it grew in power, *required* that subscription as necessary before admission to the ministry in each church, and necessary oftentimes before admission to Christian communion, which had arisen at first from the *voluntary* act of its members.

Here then the *Protestants* became divided. They had departed from the church of *Rome* on a true PRINCIPLE, that *no one could explain the will of God, better than God*

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himself

himself had done it : and now already they had departed from their PRINCIPLE. And they no sooner did it, than they departed from *each other* too.

The *Church of Rome*, on the contrary, always true to her interests, observed their error, and drew them deeper into it ; and then laid hold on that as an argument against them. She had laid down a convenient *position* for herself, that her decisions were *infallible*, and not to be enquired into ; that the Bible was *unsafe* to be trusted into the hands of the vulgar, who must implicitly abide by her *interpretation* of it : and these *differences* among the Reformed Churches were pointed out by her as so many *proofs* of her assertion ; and whenever they attempted to harmonize their confessions, or to amend and explain them into a sense more agreeable to the scriptures, or more consistent with each other, she exclaimed loudly against their
heretical

heretical pravity, and triumphantly magnified the instability of their faith.

They fell into the snare, from their solicitude to avoid it. For instead of acknowledging their error, in setting up their *confessions* as any *standard*, and appealing to the *scriptures* as they had done at first; they endeavoured to justify those confessions: and then dreading the very appearance of a change, they laid aside the thought of amending them. Henceforward those confessions which disclaimed *infallibility*, have been held up as standards *that never err*. Though *different* from each other, and many times *contradictory*, they are maintained by their respective advocates as *patterns of truth*: And while every reformed communion disapproves of every confession *but its own*, the church of Rome justly laughs at them *all*, for quitting the only fortress they could have defended.

To trace these different confessions, and point out their *diversity*, would be unnecessary

cessary at present. Suffice it to say, that they were so different in many not unimportant doctrines, as more than once to have engaged the labours of the learned to attempt to reconcile them to each other. Witness the writers of that age, who lament their fruitless endeavours. Witness the writers of later times. And witness the confessions of this day existing in their full force in the several communions of Protestants.

Leaving therefore that unpleasing prospect, it will be more to *our* purpose to look at home; to see how the matter stands with us: *Whether we have departed from our PRINCIPLES; and if we have, how we may best return to them.*

Luther's translation of the Bible into German, was followed soon by translations into various languages, and among the rest into our own. The doctrines of the *Reformers* had very early made great advances in this nation, already well inclined

to

to receive them on account of the oppressions of *Popery* under which it long had laboured. For some time indeed, the despotic sway of our Henry VIII. who had entered the lists *against* Luther, (and obtained *thereby* the title of Defender of the Faith), withheld men from making public profession of their sentiments. But when *passion* rather than *religion* had occasioned him to cast off the Papal yoke † they began to disclose their opinions. However, during his reign they did little more than exchange one Pope for another: the *supremacy* they had given him, leading his tyrannical temper into an imagination, that he had the same right over the *doctrines* as well as the *discipline* of the Church, which the Popes had before asserted (an imagination always too flattering to Princes; and not peculiar to him). From that time *his will* became the *standard* of right and wrong: And though the prudence of

Cran-

† 1534.

Cranmer and others about him, sometimes led that towards forwarding the Reformation in this kingdom ; nothing was established during his life, but a heterogeneous medley between Protestantism and Popery ; to which last he remained always most inclined.

But when his throne was left to a minor,† and that minor came under the tutelage of a protestant protector, the *reformed religion* gained the ascendant. It had been advancing gradually many years ; and during the last twelve, since the rejection of the papal power, had been advancing with firmer step : And being thus longer in digestion, was perhaps more prudently and carefully established here than in most other countries. The BIBLE was put into every hand as *the only* RULE. The LITURGY was rendered more *simple*, and ordered in the English tongue : And every
ob-

† Edward VI. 1546.

observance was taken under consideration, and retained or rejected as to the learned of that time appeared most conducive to true piety.

Hitherto nothing like a CONFESSION had been thought of, or at least attempted in *England*: (Happy would it have been for our Church if no one had ever been formed!) Popery had been abolished now some time, and Protestantism at length established in its stead; when six years afterwards*, there came forth a set of forty two ARTICLES, *with a falshood on their front*: Pretending to have been “agreed “upon by the bishops and other learned “and godly men in the last convocation;” whereas they never were offered to the convocation; but were compiled privately, and published by the authority of a minor king.

Their

* 1552.

Their *intent* was, as they say for themselves,
 “ to root out the discord of opinions and
 “ establish the agreement of true religion.”
 But their existence were of too short a
 date, for us to make any judgement how
 far they might have succeeded, had they
 continued in force. Popery was re-esta-
 blished the following year, and these ar-
 ticles abolished.

However, from a similar set, really au-
 thorised by the convocation and published
 ten years afterwards * with a similar title,
 we may presume to judge ; as they are in
 force at this very day ; and it may be known
 from the *experience* of two centuries, how
 far they have or have not obtained their
purpose.

They tell us, they too were *designed* “ for
 “ the avoiding of diversities of opinions,
 “ and

* 1562.

“ and for the establishing of consent touching true religion.” And they were authenticated both in Latin and English; most probably, that there might be no *doubt* about their meaning; but that one copy might explain the other, wherever an *equivocal* expression should occur that might be liable to a mis-construction. These last were indeed in some things *different* from the former set (in which the one or the other must have been in an error): But from these there was to be no departure, while it should please the legislature they should be kept in force. They were no sooner promulgated, than they were *required* to be *subscribed* by every one in *holy orders*, and by every one thenceforward to be admitted into holy orders. No *preachers* were to be suffered, but those who had subscribed, and were besides particularly *licensed* for that purpose: No *worship* allowed of, but such as was framed according to this *pattern*. And yet every

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man throughout the kingdom, was punishable severely who should absent himself from that prescribed form of worship and instruction. Both clergy and laity were to have the scriptures in their *hands*, that they might learn from them the *will of God*: But woe be to that man, whether of the clergy or the laity, who should have them so far in his *head* or his *heart*, as to find, or to think he found, the will of God in any title different from this—not *infallible* but—not *fallible* RULE,

Thus it stood during the *arbitrary* reign of Queen Elisabeth. In excuse for which in may be said, that the reformation was new, the fear of a return to popery great, and *toleration* in religious matters, unheard of under popery, though a consequence of the principle of protestantism, was not yet sufficiently understood to be adopted by protestants. All the clergy subscribed to this STANDARD OF DOCTRINE; and subscribed

scribed probably with sincerity. It was agreeable to the general sentiments of the times; and it is supposed that such as disapproved of it, abstained from the ministry.

But under her successor * things took a very different turn. Though in the first year of his reign, the most exceptionable form of subscription was established by our canons †, which though never passed into a law have been observed ever since; yet in his reign also, began to be allowed a *latitude of interpretation* in those articles, which had been set forth *to avoid a diversity of opinions*. *Arminianism* condemned at *Dordrecht* ‡, was gaining ground in *England*. The Archbishop was Arminian. The King himself indeed was not; but his politics obliged him to favour those of that persuasion who were numerous and his best friends. The articles certainly seemed to

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speak

* James I. 1602.

† 1603.

‡ 1619.

speak a different language *. There was
 no reconciling them to the present temper,
 but by making their language say what it
 never meant. A DECLARATION was set
 forth †, whose authority I will not ques-
 tion, and whose meaning I will not misin-
 terpret : It is in all our large prayer-books,
 and may be consulted. Whatever was its
intent, or by whomsoever published (for it
 carries no name) it has been continued ever
 since these times ; and has been *supposed*
 to mean to authorise subscription to the
 articles *in any sense the words will bear*. If
 it meant that, it meant to *declare*, that
 thence—

* It is true the Dean of Gloucester and others have at-
 tempted to prove that the 17th article is not Calvinistic
 but Arminian in its *intention*. They *may* be right in their
 conclusions ; but a common reader would *certainly* be in-
 duced to call that article Calvinistic. It has generally been
 so understood : and yet perhaps may be subscribed either by
 an Arminian or a Calvinist. If so, how is it deceiver ?
 and where is the *use* of such an ambiguous test ?

† Between 1620 and 1630, most probably.

thenceforward, what was established “to avoid a diversity of opinions,” should no longer be considered in that light *by the legislature*; and accordingly need not *by the subscribers*, who might be of any opinion they pleased, provided they could reconcile it to themselves to set pen to paper. If it did not mean that, it has been very unfortunately misunderstood. The exceptions, I confess, are not to me so *clear* as to convey any *one* very determinate meaning; only *in general*, that all might think as they would, provided they kept their thoughts to themselves. A rare EXPLANATION of an act, which was intended and still presumed to be, as a *test* of a man’s opinion!

In the next reign * things proceeded in the same channel. Arminianism encreased: The king himself was now Arminian: and

* Charles I. 1625.

and the articles still continued to be subscribed by Arminians and Contra-arminians under the sanction of this *equivocal* declaration.

The tragical scene that ensued, set aside every ordinance for a season.

The RESTORATION was followed immediately by the last famous ACT OF UNIFORMITY; * which so far as it resettled an *uniform worship* in our established church, deserves our praise. But as to its requiring not only a declaration of *conformity* to the *use* of the liturgy, but an express *approbation* of *all its contents*; and its appointing afresh, as had before been prescribed by 13 *Eliz.* the reading of the articles *in the church*, and a declaration of *assent to them*; while at the same time the king's declaration was left prefixed to them, allowing

* 1661.

allowing, or understood to allow, of a *latitude* in their interpretation;—*this can admit of no excuse*. If it was designed thereby to cut off diversity of opinions after what had happened; it was folly or madness to suppose that any act of man could do it, unless by shutting up the avenues to knowledge. If that was not the design of the legislators; they could mean nothing but to *introduce*, or at least *continue* hypocrisy, not only in sacred things, but in the house of God itself: more especially when it is considered, that the members and clergy of the church of England at that time, were *known to be* more averse to some leading doctrines in our articles and liturgy, than were the Puritans themselves against whom this act was levelled.

It continued thus during the next short reign*: and these articles, which had
been

* James II. 1684.

been drawn up in Q. *Eliz.* time, were still retained as patterns of sound doctrine and *unaltered*; though the clergy had been supposed to have studied the scriptures ever since, and were known to have departed from these standards in some *very important* particulars; yet were they still retained, still required to be subscribed by all who would be admitted into the ministry of the church; nay furthermore now by all who would only keep a grammar-school. No one who differed from them, was to be *suffered* to point out their error, to absent himself from hearing them in the house of God, to worship God in peace in any other way, or to make use of that knowledge he had acquired by the study of the scriptures, which he had perhaps promised and it certainly was his duty to study

But when *civil liberty* (as far as is consistent with the best of governments) was recovered to the subject at the REVOLU-
TION,

TION, liberty was in some degree recovered to the *conscience* too. The ACT OF TOLERATION * followed soon. A great and *Christian* step! but which yet stopped one step short of perfection.

At that time the DISSENTERS from the established church, agreed better with the *doctrines* of our first reformers, than did our clergy themselves. Their objections lay against our *liturgy*, and our *discipline*: and from these they were released. All the acts against *teachers* in separate conventicles were suspended; provided those teachers be licensed, after taking the oaths to government, and subscribing our articles (excepting three or four that relate to the discipline of our church): and all the laws against *absentees* from church were suspended, in relation to those who should frequent such *licensed* conventicles. The

E *dissenters*

dissenters were glad of these terms. The licensing, and the oaths, were part of civil discipline. They objected not at that time to the subscription required; and forgot they might hereafter wish to be released. The *Quakers* alone were exempted.

AMENDMENTS were soon after * proposed within our own pale, by some of the greatest men our church ever produced: whose labours, alas! proved fruitless. It would be diving too much into politics to point out the cause.

Nothing then remained to be done, but to set men at ease under their situation, *till the times should admit of an amendment*. This was attempted in relation to subscription by bishop Burnet: who endeavoured to lay the articles as *open* as he could:

* 1689.

could: but he left us afterwards in a legacy, his true thoughts on subscriptions, and amendments in our worship. *

* “ The requiring subscriptions to the thirty-nine articles is a great imposition. I believe them all myself. But as those about original sin and predestination, might be expressed more unexceptionably; so I think it is a better way to let such matters continue to be still the standard of doctrine, *with some few corrections*, and to censure those who teach any contrary tenets; than to oblige all that serve in the church to subscribe them. The greater part subscribe without ever examining them; and others do it because they must do it, though they can hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them. Churches and societies are much better secured by laws, than by subscriptions: it is a more reasonable as well as a more easy method of government.

“ Our worship is the perfectest composition of devotion that we find in any church ancient or modern. Yet the corrections that were agreed to by a deputation of bishops and divines in the year 1689, would make the whole frame of our liturgy still more perfect, as well as more unexceptionable; and *will I hope at some time or other be better entertained than they were then*. I am persuaded, they are such as would bring in the much greater part of the Dissenters to the communion of the church; and are in themselves *desirable*, though there were not a Dissenter in the nation.”

See bishop Burnet's conclusion of the history of his own times; where he gives this as “ a sort of *testament* or dying speech which he leaves behind him, *to be read and considered when he can speak no more.*”

IN

IN THE PRESENT CENTURY, the scriptures have been studied and explained on a more rational plan than had hitherto been adopted. Very great light had indeed been thrown upon them by the more learned labours of the foregoing times : and yet something still remained, and more perhaps yet remains to be done. The systems of the ancient philosophy, too much interwoven into the divinity of former ages, have been laid aside, and scripture collated with itself; and much new light acquired thereby. This has led men still farther off from the scholastic language, and the scholastic doctrine of our articles, of which they have grown impatient. The writings of *Locke*, though long dead, still speak the language of religious liberty. The true catholic endeavours of a *Hoadly*, who has done more to open men's minds on those subjects than volumes of the father's, still breathe in our remembrance and inspire us to tread

tread in his steps. Every *doctrine* has been scrutinized and brought to the test of *scripture*, and retained or rejected as it proved upon trial : and in that trial, many things which had passed before as of just weight, have been found deficient.

Hence has appeared also more manifestly, the *inexpediency* of subscriptions to human creeds, and human articles of faith ; while yet every one has feared to arraign, what has been so many years established. The greatest *divines and prelates* OF OUR CHURCH, have long thought our *liturgy* to stand in need of *amendment* ; yet have they to this day continued to declare their *unfeigned approbation* of its *whole* contents. They all have been obliged *in secret*, to reconcile our *articles* to their own ideas ; yet have they still subscribed, and *publicly professed* to approve, what in part, perhaps in whole, they have wished they were well rid of.

Not

Not so the DISSENTERS. They, like better christians, subscribed at first *with sincerity* what was agreeable to their own opinions : and when their opinions began to depart from our articles, they neglected to subscribe them, (hoping, perhaps, their omission would be overlooked.) Their immediate maintenance indeed did not depend upon their doing it, as did that of the established clergy ; neither was it any one's peculiar business to see them do it : but, though they became liable to the penalties of the law, they chose rather to run that hazard than to act against their conscience.

THUS it had stood now many years ; and *private* wishes, and even attempts, had not been wanting to get these things redressed. Many *publications* had set forth the necessity of a *review of our liturgy* ; in which *all* men were agreed, and which yet *no* man in authority was seen to set forwards,

forwards. Others had pointed out the *absurdity* (to say no worse) of subscribing those *old forms*, which are so incongruous with the sentiments of the present generation; yet had no one given the least *hopes* of their amendment. Others had pleaded for their *total removal*, with great force of argument, and little apparent success. (Few have strength of mind to see, or resolution enough to lay aside, old prejudices, and at once to look so deep). THE TIMES had been very different from what they were in the arbitrary reigns when these rigorous laws were set on foot. The *Church* was at peace within herself. Church-doctrines were not interwoven into the politics of the age, as they had been in the former. Yet did there appear no *design* in the rulers of this age to make use of an opportunity, which the worthies of the last would gladly have laid hold on. DELAYS are always said

to

to be dangerous ; and delays had encreased the complaint ; till that *uneasiness* which had been felt long, and scarcely stifled now many years, was grown to such a height as could *contain itself no longer*.

A PETITION was accordingly presented to the house of commons, by a number of the *established church* ; setting forth the grievance of subscription to human articles of faith ; praying for relief from that which they apprehended ought not to be *required* ; and appealing to the scriptures ; as being by the original PRINCIPLE of the reformation, the only RULE of *doctrine* that could be *complied* with.

Its success is well known. It was intended to have been passed over in civil silence (the stale artifice of worldly politicians, to put off a request they dare not face) : but through the over-ruling hand of providence, the house was drawn into a debate by those who least of all wished

wished the cause success. The *petition* was indeed thrown out: but the *debate* has more fully brought to light the *justice* of the demand. *Enquiries*, however conducted, are always favourable in the end to *truth*.

In the course of the debate, the glaring *impropriety* of requiring SUBSCRIPTION IN OUR UNIVERSITIES from the young men and laity, was pointed out and acknowledged; acknowledged, I believe I might say, by all. It was in consequence of that, *recommended* to the two universities, to rectify that matter for themselves; as its continuance can serve no purpose, but to train up our youth either to *inattention* or *dissingenuity*. One of them has just done *something*, the other, *nothing*. Application has since been made to parliament to do it for them: but a longer day is allowed them to do it for themselves.

In the same debate the state of THE DISSENTER'S SUBSCRIPTION came likewise on the carpet; and it was wished they might be absolved from the rigour of a law, not complied with and not executed. They understood that administration had acknowledged the propriety of releasing them from it; and would have been wanting to themselves and their posterity, if they had neglected to apply for what seemed now so likely to be granted. Their bill passed the *commons* after an ample discussion; but, tho' debated in the *house of lords*, was rejected *there* by a great majority. Whatever were the motive that led them to it (might one be allowed to say, misled them?) the whole bench of bishops composed a part of that majority.

THE DISSENTEES renewed their application the succeeding year; when it was hoped it might have met with a better fate, after the right reverend bench
had

had reconsidered the matter. The two greatest lawyers of the age, however different in their political connexions, united on this occasion, and spoke in favour of the bill with a strength of argument that was unanswerable. Most of the principal ornaments of that house were its advocates. The opposers, though *confuted*, were not yet *convinced*. The bill passed in the negative by a considerable majority. However, one *Protestant bishop* now gave his voice for it. Some few others did not give theirs against it. In all the debates it was acknowledged from the highest authority, that it would be *persecution* to put the present laws in force : yet does it not shew too great tendency to a *persecuting spirit*, to let those laws stand un-repealed, which any one may enforce if he pleases. Such laws should not in the 18th century, be suffered to disgrace our statute-book.

But though the *Clerical petition* was not renewed that year ; the *petitioners* were known not to desist from their claim.

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They only waited the event of an *application to the BISHOPS* ; set on foot in the interim from another quarter ; which it was but prudent and respectful in them to wait for. That application now removed the objection that had been made to the petitioners of want of deference to the bishops ; and threw it again into their hands as the candid disquisitors had done some years before *, to do what *they* should judge right in an affair that seemed to belong to their province. What numbers would have joined in this application is not known. The *scheme* was defeated early, by an over-cautious embassy sent *previously* to take their lordships sentiments upon it : to which it is said they returned as cautious an answer ; that “ in their opinion, it was neither prudent nor safe to do *any thing*.” The appliers had not declared against *subscription* ; but had merely desired a *revival of the present forms*. Nothing could be more moderate. And even those *present forms*, which a great

* 1746.

part of the clergy are known not entirely to approve of in their hearts, though they contrive to sign them; and the *Dissenters* are known not to sign at all; the *bishops* declined taking under their consideration. The *petitioners* thereby seem to be justified in not having applied to them at the first.

HERE then the matter RESTS at present. But GOD FORBID THAT IT SHOULD EVER REST so! while there is *honesty* among Christians it cannot. We call ourselves a *Protestant church*; declare against *infallibility*; and appeal to *the scriptures themselves* as containing all things necessary to salvation, which we recommend to every one, and require of our clergy to study. A set of *articles*, drawn up two centuries ago suitable to the scholastic notions of those times, remain still in use as *the pattern* according to which all the *clergy* are to square their opinions, and all the *clergy* are to frame their instructions. Even *Dissenters* from the established church are not allowed to worship God in their own way, unless they will

will bear testimony to the truth of *her* rule. Both *Clergy* and *Dissenters* have studied the scriptures; and in many instances cannot find them conformable with it; and have *applied* accordingly to the legislature in its several branches, to release them from so hard a service, as to be made to testify an exact conformity they do not see. What has been the answer? The CLERGY are told that this is not *a* time for amendments, and they must be *allowed* to use *a* latitude in the interpretation of the articles, to *reconcile* them to themselves, or to take them in *any* sense the words will bear; (or, perhaps, like Peter's shoulder-knot, if the matter cannot be reconciled *totidem verbis*, to do it *totidem literis*.) And as to the DISSENTERS; they are *assured* that notwithstanding the laws are kept in force against them, their non-compliance shall (for the present) *be winked at*.

These are no longer the soothing words of too fond a friend, the casuistry of private advice, or the deceit a man puts upon himself,

himself, who is unwilling to lose his hopes of preferment upon which all his prospects in this life depend ; but the counsel of persons in authority ; the only possible excuse they give to keep men quiet, and lull them asleep, under the *continuance* of a burthen which neither they nor their fathers knew well how to bear. Nor is the non-compliance of the *Dissenters*, any longer to be looked upon as a disobedience to government ; though it is a disobedience to laws which though now *dormant*, it is well known may at any time hereafter be roused and enforced against them.

But suppose A CLERGYMAN to be scrupulous, and unwilling to set his hand to what he does not *thoroughly* believe ; and unwilling to declare that *for truth* before the congregation, which in his conscience he cannot fully and in every part allow to be truth. (The case is *possible* : he is far from certain that God will allow of *sophistry*, whatever his *earthly superiors* may). What is he to do in this dilemma?

I.

Is he to be *silent* then, or to be *kept back*, or to *retire* from the ministry of God in his church, because he is of all men the *most fit* to *serve* in it? (If he retires ever so *peaceably*; he is liable to excommunication, and all its harassing consequences.) Or is he to *force himself* into compliance, as thinking he can that way be most useful to the cause of religion; and then to be reprobated and suspected of sinister views, and branded with opprobrious names, because he *solicits* humbly to be relieved from so iniquitous a burthen? And are the DISSENTERS to have the rod held over them for ever, if they *will not* comply with what we know they *cannot*? Or are they to be suspected of designs against Christianity, or against the state, because they desire to be released from so severe a law; so contrary to all the dictates of humanity; so contrary to all true Christianity?

It is true all LATITUDE is now *allowed* of that can be desired; and, since the
late

late debates, though no *law* has passed, seems to be allowed of *publicly*. But does it follow from thence that it is no grievance to an *ingenuous* mind ? *Subscription* was thought to mean, that a man thereby declared his sentiments to be agreeable to the articles, and the articles agreeable to the word of God ; but now indeed it is no such thing. Our *Rulers*, when charged with such a supposition, are said to have openly disavowed it. The *Defenders* of *Subscription* have in general *certainly* denied it : They know better how to quibble about words ; and, notwithstanding the title of our articles, *insist upon it* that a latitude of interpretation was *always intended* to be allowed in our subscription. Some, less daring, hold that it means to testify a *coincidence in opinion with the compilers* or their *contemporaries*, whose opinions are to be fought up and down elsewhere : Others have thought, that it may be considered as a subscription to *articles of peace* ; what a man binds himself not to contradict (yet is

there nothing to justify that acceptation) : Others, on the strength of the King's declaration, have supposed that they may be taken *in any sense the words will bear* ; however foreign to their true or obvious meaning : Others again, *so far forth as they are agreeable to scripture* ; (and without doubt, so far as they are agreeable to scripture they are agreeable to it) : Others, as an assent to the *general doctrines of our church*, as set forth in the writings of our most eminent divines ; (little agreeable to the articles themselves, God is witness !) : Others view most of them in the same light as we do *obsolete statutes*, and consider subscription to them accordingly : Others lastly, to go no farther, as *a mere Form of words*, necessary to the *legal* conveyance of holy orders and of all preferments excepting bishopricks in our church ; and therefore to be complied with *as such* ; like the other *Forms* usual in *conveyances* of all kinds, with which our lawyers are well acquainted :

And

And indeed, this upon the whole is all they really can amount to.

Thus ; after the *Defenders* and *Patrons* of our subscription, in parliament and out of parliament, the laity and the clergy, from the highest rank down to the lowest among us, *have defended it* (the only way they could defend it, or reconcile it to themselves) *on this bottom*, or by some such *subterfuge* ; No person need any longer to have his *scruples* about it. Our Subscription is NOW no longer UNDERSTOOD, it is no longer SUPPOSED to be, a *Test or Trial of a man's opinions at all* ; but merely kept up FOR FORM'S SAKE, because it might be some trouble to *amend it*. If OUR RULERS henceforward would have it otherwise, it NOW lies upon THEM to make it so.*

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* In order that the lay-reader may know more particularly what is thus *explained away* ; we will here subjoin the words in which these subscriptions and declarations are made : They seem to be very precise and determinate :

The AUTHOR of these pages will perhaps be blamed, for thus *laying open* the fore, and *exposing* our weakness. Gladly would he *conceal* it, if that would lead us to *repentance* : but the misfortune is, it
has

“ I *A. B.* (now to be ordained or now to be instituted, &c.) do willingly and ex animo subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Church of England agreed upon in the convocation held at London in the year 1562, and to the three articles of the 36th of the ecclesiastical canons published in the year 1604, and to all things that are contained in them.”

The three articles here referred to, are

1. The *Supremacy* ; nearly in the same words as the oath of supremacy.

2dly, “ That the *Book of Common Prayer*---containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God ; and that it may lawfully be used ; and that he himself will use it---and no other.”

3dly, “ That he alloweth the *Book of articles of Religion* ;---and acknowledgeth all and every the articles---to be agreeable to the word of God.”

The Candidate then subscribes the declaration following :
 “ I *A. B.* do declare that I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by law established.”

These he does in the presence of the Bishop : who in this *most solemn* part of his episcopal function is to *see* it done.

After-

has been concealed too long, and is inflamed now, and must be probed. Remedies have been proposed; in vain: A deaf ear has been turned to every whisper of advice. The complaint is already of *public notoriety*: and if the cure be not taken in hand di-

Afterwards, when the Subscriber has taken possession of any benefice, he repeats the last declaration again in the church.

He then reads all the 39 articles, during the time of divine service, and declares his *unfeigned assent* to the same.

After this, when the service is ended, he is openly and publicly to recite these words, *and no other*.

“ I *A. B.* do here declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book intitled the book of Common Prayer, &c.”

It appears indeed from the preceding and subsequent direction of the act, that this last declaration of unfeigned assent, &c. relates only to *the use* of the common prayer, and not to *all its contents*. But the Declarer, is not allowed to insert this word (*use*) into the declaration itself to explain his meaning, even though he understands it as the act directs.

The subscription *ex animo* to the 39 articles (and to the book of Common Prayer, included in the three articles of the canon) meant *originally* it is presumed, to imply a belief and approbation of *all things contained in them*; whatever *improved constructions* may now be put upon it.

rectly,

rectly, the glory of our church will become extinct. If things be to remain thus ; adieu to all *honour*, adieu to all *honesty* and *good faith* among us.

They may call him *Heretic* for this, as they have done the whole body of the petitioners to parliament ; and with as little truth : (names are often given where argument fails). He was not a Petitioner. They may represent him as *disaffected to Government* ; and will be as wide of the mark. It matters not *who* he is, or *what* he is ; but whether his words be *true*. He believes in *God*, and not in *man* : in *Jesus Christ*, his Redeemer from heaven, and in no earthly *Pope* whatever.

If he has misrepresented matters, and our *Articles* be *so excellent* as not to be spoken against ; let the Rulers of our Church defend them on this ground, and no longer suffer us to *doubt* or *quibble* about their meaning. Let them point out their excellence

cellence ; their *agreement* with scripture ; the *good effect* they have ever had ; the *security* obtained by them at present. Let us all be made to preach (when we do preach) *agreeable to them*. Let our Dignitaries be cited into their own courts ; to defend many a noble and truly christian passage in their writings, when confronted with these articles. Let them protect an inferior brother when called upon in the like manner : which by the way as the law now stands it is apprehended they cannot do ; yet they would not surely condemn him, for what they do themselves. Let them excuse a Dissenting Minister that shall be sued for not complying with the laws. Let them screen the Lords of the State from prosecutions, for not attending *regularly* on divine service at church or at meeting. The laws are open against them all ; and open to every informer. Let them defend and *enforce* those laws, if they are so immaculate as not to be improved upon. Let them at least make appear to the weaker brethren

brethren their christian perfection. The time will come, nay perhaps now is near, when they will find it necessary to defend our holy church itself from ruin, in this age of infidelity and irreligion : and what influence can they expect their arguments should have upon *the profane* ; after *their disregard* of all applications to *them* for relief, has driven some of her most conscientious clergy *to despair* ; and others *actually* out of the bosom of the church they love, but think they cannot continue in as teachers, because they cannot assent to her formularies with that *sincerity* which becometh Christians.

But if our articles be *indefensible*, let them be *amended* or wholly *laid aside*. The first, I confess, I had thought the thing to be desired ; and therefore would have joined in the application to the bishops for *a revision* ; and was disappointed when Mr. Wollaston fell into the measure that defeated it. But I have since been convinced

vinced of my error; and am not ashamed to acknowledge it. A man need never be ashamed of amendment. I am satisfied upon fuller consideration, that the requiring of subscription to *human articles of faith* (unless with a clause referring each to the scriptures), though practised in protestant churches, can only be *defended* on the *principles of popery*. As to mere *articles of peace*; how far they may be imposed, or assented to, is quite *another matter*. But nothing can be a greater discouragement to a man's studying the scriptures *in good earnest*, than a rigid, unconditional subscription. A jury that is *prepossessed* in favour of either party, is afraid to examine witnesses. So is a man who comes prejudiced to the study of the scriptures, and *must* find them consonant with the formulary that he has *before* subscribed: he will always be afraid to search, lest he find them otherwise. If the reformation was right, the *scriptures* must be our *only rule*. If that rule be *defective*,

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then may popery be justified in keeping it out of sight.

We are afraid for the church of Christ, you will say, if we thus give a license to every crude opinion; and Atheists and Deists, or at least Socinians and Hereticks of every kind, will gain admission among us, and enter our Church itself.

Then have they not admission now? Do our present subscriptions keep out any one person that ought to be kept out? And do they not keep out some that we should wish to admit? Will a solemn and *sincere* declaration, of our belief in the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and our sincere faith in Jesus Christ (the test that *God* requires); be a *less secure* barrier against unbelievers in any kind; than our present subscription to a set of words we are *known* to evade,—we are *taught* to evade,—we are *bid* to reconcile to ourselves? Can any thing give greater countenance

countenance to the profane than the *present* state of things?

Yet this is called; *defending the honour of our Redeemer, and supporting the Gospel of Christ*. If it be to be *thus* supported, let us send for the poor *Jesuits* discarded lately by the Pope. They are just now at leisure and wait at our doors; and will be ready to perfect us in *evasions* and *mental reservations*. Their college was founded * soon after the reformation, as a defense to Popery: the Papists have dissolved it, as wanting them no longer; and we may perhaps find occasion for their services.

For shame! for shame! call not this *defending the Gospel of Christ*;

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis tempus eget.

Christianity does indeed seem to want defenders in these days; but not such *weak defense* as this. Let TRUTH be searched to the bottom; let her be sifted and tried by heretics of every denomination; let her be brought fairly either to the test of scripture, or to the bar of common sense; and there is no fear of her suffering by the *enquiry*. Let her be disengaged from the metaphysical jargon in which the divine on one side, and the infidel on the other, have conspired to entangle her, and there is no reason to apprehend but she will be able to defend herself, and to come off victorious against every adversary. It is *falsehood* only that loves to dwell in *obscurity*. But while the friends of *truth* and of *Christianity* are involved as they now are in *clouds of darkness*, they cannot defend their cause as they should against the unbeliever; who knows they can scarce assent to their own formularies, but must dissemble in some points, and hence will suppose or pretend they do it in all.

The Papists deduce their claim to infallibility, from the pretended insufficiency of the scriptures, and the promise that God will defend his church. If their premisses were true, their argument might have some weight. But we deny the one, while we acknowledge the other; and draw a different conclusion. The Pope, the Church, the Magistrate, we conclude need not either of them be allowed infallible; because there is no intimation of it in the scriptures, and because the word of God alone is fully sufficient to the purpose for which it was designed. If we let that be our guide, and make that our study, and observe its commands; we shall know of every doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether it be of Man. This is the promise of God to his church, and to every member of it; and we may trust that he will fulfil it. However obscured at times through the wisdom of the wise, the babes in Christ may safely confide in it; for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But whoever chooses rather

ther the guidance of *man*, if he would be consistent, should return to popery at once. The Pope has the prior claim to infallibility ; and better were it to have one Pope, than many.

But if we lay aside our articles and subscriptions, you will add, and thus new-model our system, we shall be justly chargeable with the variations and inconstancy, with which the church of Rome reproaches all protestant Churches.

It is very true, we shall; but what then? When a man has lost his way, is he not in the right to wander and try different paths, 'till he recovers the right? Whereas, if he had persisted in a wrong one, he never could have reached his journey's end. When the *protestant Churches* departed from their PRINCIPLE, they lost their way: one took one road, another another; and though no one would allow himself to be mistaken, all have wandered from time to time, and must wander on, 'till they re-
turn

turn to their *true and unerring guide*, which would have conducted them aright from the first, and have kept them all together : they must return to the PRINCIPLE from whence they set out; *the sufficiency of scripture itself*. Though the *consequences* of their quitting it, have been long felt, and been lamented from the first establishment of confessions, to this very day; the true *cause* is of late discovery: it lay deeper than was imagined; in the being bound down to any *human* confession, any *particular interpretation* of scripture, at all.

Yet it concerns the state, you will reply, to keep up an established church, and an uniformity of worship; and how can she do that without an uniformity of opinion too?

Then does she not already? Has she not for many years? Is uniformity of *opinion* so indispensable? However; let her amend her *liturgy*, and then let her enforce the *use* of it, if she see it necessary, by a Promise from her clergy that they will use it, or
by

by Penalties if they depart from it. (This is a matter of *discipline*, and within her province): but why must they be tied down to approve and give their unfeigned assent to every tittle contained in it? Were that liturgy reformed *as it ought*; they could more cordially use it, and more fully give their approbation to its use. Or might they be *allowed* (under proper restrictions) to depart a little from it, and to alter a few exceptionable passages, as they now are *connived at* in some; it would give less offence to the sincere Christian. Yet, for the sake of uniformity of *worship*, why must she require from them an *ex animo* assent to a set of propositions, that are of *no part* of her *worship*, and perhaps not always *reconcilable* with it? This can never be necessary.

And yet if this were necessary from our *own* clergy and in our *own* church, why must she require such an *assent* from the dissenting clergy; who officiate not in her church, who seek not her emoluments,
and

and who renounce them because they *dissent*? Is not this a contradiction in terms? As long as they demean themselves as peaceable citizens, and do not foment disturbances in the state, they *ought* to be tolerated, they have a *right* to be tolerated to worship God in their own way, nor has the church or the civil magistrate any *right* to restrain them. When they attempt to break *the peace*, then and then only does the power of the magistrate over *their Doctrines* commence; that is, when their doctrines interfere with *civil discipline*.

What is to be done then, you may perhaps be inclined to rejoin, and what is it that you would advise? must we apply the remedy you propose, and at once lay aside all Subscription, though sanctified by the long unvaried practice of every Protestant Church, and remove all our ancient land-marks, and throw open the door for all sectaries; when we are not all of us satisfied that it would be desirable to do so, and still fewer of us that it would be safe to attempt it?

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By

By no means. You should do nothing until you are yourselves convinced of its propriety: only then when you are, you should dare to *act according to conviction*. This is all we ask: all that can be asked. For however well persuaded any of us may be that what we think is right, it is still possible we may be mistaken. But consider *impartially* what has been said above, and reflect *seriously* upon it; (and if you want farther evidence than what you find here; look into other writers who have more fully and more ably stated it); and whatever be your opinion of the *degree* of amendment required, *you must see* that in the present situation of things, you cannot in justice fit any longer *still*. Remember, that it is not an affair of *Politics* but of *Religion*; that it is not a matter of *opinion*, as where things are left indifferent, but of *conscience*, where they are obtruded on us: and that if our Articles or our Liturgy be not *strictly* and in every the *most minute* particular agreeable to the word of God, and *infallibly known to be so*; it is setting
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the authority of man *above* that of God, to make the one the standard and *rule of our faith*, and to require an unfeigned assent to *all and every thing* contained in the other. It is debauching the consciences of honest men, to call upon them to testify a *strict conformity*; which if they cannot find, they cannot sincerely profess to be true. Metaphysical explications of the most sublime subjects in divinity, are not lightly to be assented to, by *honest men*; when perhaps after their most laborious researches, they may not fully *understand* the scriptures on those obstruse points, or be able to *discover* so exact a Conformity between the text and the comment, as is required of them to *declare*. The best friends to *Episcopacy*, to an *established Liturgy*, to the general system of *discipline* in our church, may be disqualified from officiating in it with any comfort upon this account. Many there are, very many learned pious and *conscientious* clergy of our church; who now labour under these afflicting and heart-breaking circumstances:

(indeed none but the *conscientious* do or can feel this distress). *Think* then upon these things with the *seriousness* that such a cause deserves; and ask yourselves; if you do not exert your endeavours to *rectify*, no nor even to *enquire into*, what has been *pointed out* to your examination, what has been so repeatedly *requested*, and in the name of Christianity *demand*ed, how will you answer for the omission at the tribunal of the last day? You *our* LEGISLATORS, to whom these affairs are entrusted? You who alone *can* redress them?

As to what the author of this pamphlet would *advise*; it does not become him to *advise* WHAT should be done, but to *implore* that SOMETHING may. If the laying aside subscription entirely be thought utopian or unsafe, he would not recommend it. He would recommend to sacrifice to *the times* as far as in conscience may be done; to do what is *requisite* at present, what we are *convinced* is *proper*, and leave the rest to a future day; if experience shall

shall hereafter shew any thing farther to be *necessary*. No one is more ready than he to sacrifice to the sentiments and tempers of others: But he never will sacrifice his *religion* to *policy*.

Since CONFESSIONS have been *tried* in most protestant Churches, from their earliest days until now; and have ever been *found* defective and inadequate, and too frequently the cause of un-christian animosities; he would wish that ours might stand as it is, together with our homilies, as a mark of what our church once thought in her earliest days, and what perhaps some of her sons may think still; without henceforward *requiring* subscription to it. Let that entirely be *voluntary* as it was in the first confession at *Augsburg*. Let us content ourselves with *requiring* only a specific declaration from protestant Christians, of their *faith* in JESUS CHRIST, and their *belief* in the HOLY SCRIPTURES of the old and new testament, as the *RULE* of *that* *faith*. (This our church at present in her
sixth

sixth article, affirms to be all that is necessary, all that can justly be *required*; though strange to say! she does not confine herself to her *own* position.) Let us *amend* our LITURGY, as many of our prelates and most learned divines for near a century past have *desired*, and then *conform* to it. And if this be not sufficient, and a *set of* ARTICLES be still thought necessary to be super-added for the safety of our *own* church; let those articles be few, simple, perhaps negative propositions; and certainly always referring every one of them ultimately to scripture. But let not the *Dissenters* be bound down to them. And let our own *TERMS of subscription* be so conceived and expressed, as to leave out all *solemn declaration of assent* to any words and definitions of *man's device*, to any but the *pure word of God*, which in our ordinations we promised to study, and which protestants must make their *only* RULE. This, with submission, the author thinks is the *utmost* that ought to be *required*, and the *utmost* that can *sincerely and honestly* be *complied with*.

But

But, ABOVE ALL (if this shall be thought *too much* to attempt; or there be *no one* among us who will take this trouble for the sake of our holy religion, for which we all profess such veneration) he *begs and desires*, for TRUTH'S sake, that our holy church at all events be cleared of all kind of PREVARICATION: that PREVARICATION no longer be *countenanced* in her; that PREVARICATION be not *objectible* to her. THIS it is to be hoped may be done without hazarding our *all*. THIS surely is absolutely and indispensably *requisite*. In THIS he cannot be *mistaken*. And THIS it should seem, *our bishops* might get *effected*, if they would heartily and in earnest set about it. THIS *at least* our most christian bishops might be seen *to attempt*, whatever the less religious or more worldly politicians may pretend. To their own consciences he refers it, whether THIS does not *cry aloud* for amendment: and THIS he then *requests of them*, as they value that religion they profess, as they regard that church of which they

they are appointed overseers, that they would *defer* no longer.

However, since *our* BISHOPS are but a *part* of the legislature in this kingdom, though particularly entrusted in the ecclesiastical concerns of it; and since it is supposed that reformation have seldom come from the *Clergy*, though there is no reason why they should not; yet, since it does belong to each of the THREE ESTATES of the realm, and to *every individual* in each, to give redress where it is wanted; *he appeals* to every ingenuous heart among them, every breast that has any sense of religion, any feelings of conscience, to judge, whether redress be not wanted *now*. And *he adjures them* ALL, by the tender mercies of God, by their hopes of acceptance through Christ, and as they will answer it at the day of judgement, that if it *be* wanted, they who alone *can move it*, do exert their endeavours to get it granted.

Into THEIR hands he now consigns it.

With

With THEM he leaves it: thus as far as in him lies, entering his *Protest against the present practice* at the highest tribunal in this kingdom. Henceforward HE must be acquitted whatever shall be THEIR determination: and he can now continue in his function with better comfort, and go down to the grave with a better conscience. From THEM there lies no appeal but to GOD: and to GOD he must still *appeal*; not to *imprecate* any evil on those who think differently from himself, (that would be to imbibe the spirit of those laws, he wishes to cancel); nor to *call down any vengeance* on those who shall turn a deaf ear to his suit, (may the Lord forgive them! They know not what they do); but to *beg* of God to pour down his choicest *blessings* on THAT TRUE CHRISTIAN, who shall MOVE for it in *either House*, or shall COMMAND *them both* to take it under consideration. From whatever Quarter it be proposed, or however undertaken, *may* THE ALMIGHTY *prosper their endeavours*: and may he grant

in this her day that our church, the church of England, the bulwark the pride and head of the Reformation, may *lay aside all REMAINS of uncharitableness towards them that are without* ; and casting off all EQUIVOCATION, may dare OPENLY to amend herself within. So will she set a good example to all her sisters, and shew herself to be really the *true, and holy, and catholic church of Christ*. The eyes of the whole World are now upon her. Forbid it heaven ! that Atheists and Deists, the profligate and profane, should in the issue be found to receive more encouragement from the Church, or from the state, in these present days, than the sincerely distressed sons and disciples of CHRIST !

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 3, line ult. for 1617, read 1517. p. 4, l. 15, for *Eurthemisme* r. *burthenfome*. p. 5, l. 3, after *to do* add *so*. p. 20 note, for *Aminian* r. *Arminian*. p. 21, l. 9, for *exceptions* r. *expressions*. p. 34, l. 13. for *diffussion* r. *discussion*. p. 35, l. 16, after *yet* does it *dele* not.

